Around the Nation

Panther Lawyer Defies Court

CHICAGO—Black Panther Attorney Donald Stang defied a court order yesterday by refusing to answer questions about a Phanther statement that could result in the dropping of charges against Cook County State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan for allegedly obstructing justice in connection with a police raid that left two Panther leaders dead.

Citing the lawyer-client privilege, Stang refused to answer to defense questions and continued to refuse after Circuit Court Judge Philip J. Romiti ruled that the Panther statement was not confidential information because other persons had signed and witnessed it.

As a result Romiti could cite him for contempt of court, but the judge put off a decision. He instructed Stang to speak with his client, Louis Truelock, to get Truelock's views on the statement.

Stang's refusal came on the fifth day of an extraordinary hearing which Romiti ordered to determine the authenticity of the Truelock statement and three other Panther documents which were discovered accidentally July 22 in Stang's office. The statements were written when Stang was representing the Panthers shortly after the Dec. 4, 1969, police raid in which Panther leaders Mark Clark and Fred Hampton were killed.

In the statements four Panthers admit firing shots and handling weapons during the raid, contradicting earlier Panther testimony before county grand jury that indicted Hanrahan. If the statements are proved valid, it could lead to dismissal of the indictment.